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TO: **Economic Support Supervisors
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W-2 Agencies**

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BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No.: 03-65

Date: 10/27/2003

Non W-2 ☐ W-2 ☒ CC ☐

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: **ADDITION OF FAMILY NEEDS QUESTIONS TO BARRIER
SCREENING TOOL**

CROSS REFERENCE: Operations Memo 03-16, Barrier Screening Tool Implementation
Information

EFFECTIVE DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2003

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to notify Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies about the addition of questions to the Barrier Screening Tool (BST) effective November 1, 2003, that pertain to the special needs of other family members.

BACKGROUND

The BST, which was implemented statewide by W-2 agencies between May and July 2003, deals primarily with the personal barriers and/or special needs of the W-2 participant. During implementation of the BST, requests came into the Department to add questions to the tool that address the special needs of other family members. In response, the Department has developed a new section for the BST called Family Needs that will become a required part of the web-based Barrier Screening Application effective November 1, 2003.

FAMILY NEEDS INTRODUCTION

The Family Needs questions are designed somewhat differently than the other sections of the

BST. Unlike the original BST questions, the Family Needs section does not attempt to screen for hidden barriers and no instructions regarding follow-up action steps are provided. Rather, the questions are a means to assist the worker with gathering information about special needs of other family members in the household that may affect the W-2 activities and participation schedule the participant is assigned to. The information gathered may also lead to referral for services by other community providers as determined by the worker.

The Family Needs Section contains:

- Five mandatory questions, called Section I; and
- Two sets of follow-up questions, (one for children and one for adults with special needs) called Section II, which are optional for the worker to ask the participant. The questions in Section II gather more in-depth information about special needs such as medical, daily living, and child care needs. Workers should base whether or not to ask the Section II questions on the level of need uncovered in Section I. If the needs identified could have an affect on the W-2 participant's work and training assignments or participation schedule, then the Section II questions should be asked.

The attached training packet lays out the questions found in the Family Needs section of the web-based Barrier Screening Application and provides instructions for how to use it. The Family Needs section will also be incorporated into the paper version of the BST found on the BST website at www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/w2/bst/default.htm.

POLICY

Beginning November 1, 2003, the Family Needs Section will officially become part of the BST. Like the other sections of the BST, the participant may decline to complete the Family Needs Section (or any question within the Family Needs section) without penalty of payment reduction.

PARTICIPANTS SCREENED PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2003

Participants who have already completed (or declined) the BST prior to November 1, 2003, must be given the opportunity to answer the Family Needs questions at their next W-2 review of eligibility.

- 1) If the participant had previously answered questions in at least one section of the BST, then the worker may go into the existing record using the Edit function and enter the responses to the Family Needs questions.
- 2) If the participant had previously declined all sections of BST, then the worker will need to create a new record, decline all sections of the BST that were previously declined by the participant and then enter the responses to the Family Needs questions.

For those individuals who have already completed (or declined) the BST, there will be no automated tracking of whether or not the Family Needs Section was completed (i.e., this will not be reflected on the Overdue BST Reports). Workers must manually track, using case comments, whether or not the participant agreed to complete the Family Needs Section and what, if any, impact the information that was gathered will have on his/her participation.

PARTICIPANTS SCREENED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2003

Participants who have not yet completed (or declined) the BST as of November 1, 2003, must be offered the opportunity to answer the Family Needs questions along with the rest of the BST. If the participant agrees to complete the BST using the W-2 BST Agreement form, the Family Needs Section must also be completed. Keep in mind that a participant may decline to answer

any question s/he is uncomfortable with. If the participant declines to complete the BST, the Family Needs section must also be considered declined and the worker must indicate this in the web-based Barrier Screening application.

The W-2 BST Agreement form has been updated to include language about the Family Needs section. The new version of the form is attached and has also been updated on the BST website (note: the Spanish version of the Agreement form will be updated in November).

DOCUMENTING FAMILY NEEDS OUTCOMES

Unlike the other sections of the BST, there are no instructions provided for the Family Needs Section on follow-up action steps. Any follow-up activity that results from the information gathered is decided upon by the W-2 worker and his/her management. For that reason, it is critical for the worker to document in case comments and on CARES screen WPBD (when appropriate) what, if any, employment barriers were identified and what type of follow-up (e.g., service referrals, changes in activities or participation schedule, etc.) took place.

The Family Needs Training document and the W-2 Barrier Screen Tool Agreement form are posted with this memo.

CONTACTS

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Note: Email contacts are preferred. Thank you.

DWD/DWS/BDS/DR